

Summer Hazards - Part II

16 Aug 1984

By Dr. Janet Kelly

Two weeks ago you became mini-experts on the stings from bees and wasps. This week we will take a look at another hazard which can ruin your summer fun: poison ivy, oak and sumac. The rash you get from an encounter with these plants is called allergic contact dermatitis, and it can be miserable! Approximately 70% of the U.S. population is sensitive and will get a rash if exposed to these plants. Most of the victims do not need medical help with their rash, but 10% of Americans have a more severe reaction that causes disability, worry, and a real need for medical care. There is also a small, lucky segment of the population (approximately 20%) who are completely immune to the toxins in the plants!

The very first episode of dermatitis from contact with these plants appears nine to fifteen days after exposure to the plants. After that, the rash will occur within 24 to 48 hours after exposure. Sensitization is common in children over three years of age, but it rarely occurs in those under the age of one.

You can get the rash from direct contact with the plant with exposed parts of your skin. You can also get rash from indirect exposure, which results from contact with contaminated hands, clothing, tools, equipment and pets. It can remain under the fingernails for several days unless the nails are carefully washed.

The best way to prevent a contact dermatitis from these plants is to avoid them. The first step in avoidance is to recognize them. "Leaves three, leave it be; berries white, run from sight" is a useful adage for describing poison ivy and poison oak, both of which have three leaflets. Poison sumac

also has white berries, but 7-13 leaflets.

The shape of the poison oak leaf suggests an oak leaf, while the leaf of poison ivy may vary. Poison ivy species may have notched smooth or lobed edges, and the leaflet surface may be smooth, hairy, dull or shiny. The color also varies with the season: they are green in spring and summer and a beautiful orange and red in the fall.

Clothing can effectively prevent plant dermatitis provided it does not become saturated with the toxin. The rash can be aborted by prompt removal of the toxin. Washing with soap and water within ten minutes can prevent the rash. Even a walk thru a stream or splash in a lake will help. Contaminated clothing becomes harmless by ordinary laundering. Tools or equipment may be cleaned with soap and water, alcohol or acetone. Unfortunately, there are no really good "desensitization" treatments. Only partial desensitization can be achieved

skin cancer in the U.S.A. and one of the highest incidents of Lip cancer in the world. This is partly due to our Scandinavian Heritage, and our love for gardening, yard work, outdoor sports, both summer and winter, farming, and large families necessitating

exposure adding to the risk. If parents protect their children when they are young, and they protect themselves when they are grown, the brief period of tanning when they are teens is not likely to harm them.

6. Cancer of the skin is the most common of all cancers, with an over-all cure rate of 90 percent.

7. Be alert to any abnormal skin conditions, and report them to your doctor.

For more information or pamphlets, contact Mrs. Elaine Murdock or Mrs. Mary Bluth.

Elaine Murdock
Daniels

RED LIGHT GREEN LIGHT

Dear Kristine: With several teens and preteens in our home, keeping food in the refrigerator is difficult to say the least. My children were constantly snacking on the left over chicken I'd planned to put in a casserole for supper, and ignoring bits of leftovers I was trying to use up.

Then I invested in some inexpensive red and green labels. A red label on a container means "Don't you dare," and a green label means, "Go for it."

S. Peterson
Heber

MONEY CAKE

For a fun birthday surprise, make

your own special teachers and friends. I have made it a fun practice, with each new experience my own daughter has, to try to contact the person who helped me experience the same thing, and thank them. This has been delightful and gratifying to both me and the person I finally remembered to thank.

Deanne Lewis

DADDY TOO

Dear Kristine: A few weeks before our baby was born, I went on a shopping spree for my husband. My purchases were carefully wrapped and hidden in my bottom dresser drawer. When our son was born, I told my husband to open my drawer when he got home and open one package. It was a Mug that said "Daddy" on it. He had one gift to open each day that I was in the hospital.

Charlene P.

How clever of you Charlene! At a time when Mother and Baby are receiving so much attention it's nice to remember Dad.

From potty training blues to troublesome teens: Share your tips, solutions, and questions. Write to Parent's Help Line, 250 North 500 West, Heber City, UT 84032 or call 654-2048.

654-1181

UTAH

In our time,
no foreign army
has ever occupied
American soil.

Until now.

KIRCHMILL
INDEPENDENT
RED
DAWN

13 NIGHTLY AT 9:15

654-1181

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